Christianity, War, Paganism, And Honour

Preface

While David Myatt's post-2012 writings about extremism have (i) been prejudicially rejected by individuals of a particular political persuasion {1} and (ii) ignored, or even prejudicially rejected, by academics who have mentioned him usually in the context of certain unproven allegations, {2} a most interesting and neglected aspect of those post-2012 writings concern war, Catholicism, and 'good and evil' in the context of Christianity, Islam, the modern State and his own pagan philosophy of pathei-mathos. {3}

Most interesting, for five reasons. First, because when studied without preconceptions they complement and extend his philosophy of pathei-mathos; second, because they are based on his personal experience of Christianity and Islam; thirdly because they reveal his scholarly knowledge of those subjects; fourthly, because the concept of the numinous is embedded in such writings, {4} and fifthly because they not only compliment his writings about his personal rejection of extremism but elegantly refute the aforementioned prejudicial rejection of his post-2012 writings.

Most of Myatt's writings concerning war, Catholicism, and 'good and evil' are contained in the following texts:

(i) *Questions of Good, Evil, Honour, and God* which forms part two of his 2013 *Religion, Empathy, and Pathei-Mathos*; {5}

(ii) the 2018 essay *Persecution And War*; {6}

(iii) his three part 2019 text *In Defence Of The Roman Catholic Church*; {7}

(iv) his 2013 book *Understanding And Rejecting Extremism*. {8}

Part One

Good, Evil, and Christianity

Catholicism

Myatt's views about Catholicism are relevant to both his understanding of the religion of Christianity and the development of his philosophy of pathei-mathos, and are summarized in Part One of *In Defence Of The Roman Catholic Church*:

> "why does someone who has developed a somewhat paganus weltanschauung – the mystical individualistic numinous way of pathei-mathos – now defend a supra-personal organization such as the Roman Catholic Church? Because I from personal experience appreciate that for all its many faults – recent and otherwise – and despite my disagreement regarding some of its teachings it still on balance does, at least in my fallible opinion, presence – as it has for centuries presenced – aspects of the numinous and which presencing has over centuries, again in my fallible opinion, had a beneficial affect on many human beings."

In Part Two of that text, his personal experience of Catholicism and his understanding and scholarly study of Christianity are evident, as in his comprehensive footnotes to the quotation below and which footnotes are included here for completeness:

<! begin quotation>

> Two of the guiding practical principles of living as a Roman Catholic seem to me, on the basis of personal experience and fallible understanding, to be expiation and penance, related as they are

to what was termed the Sacrament of Confession – now re-named the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation – and thence related to one of the founding principles of the Roman Catholic Church: that an ordained Priest has the religious authority [1] to give absolution for the "sins" [2] a person has committed, and the authority to specify what penance is required for expiation, but which absolution is dependant on the person making a full and truthful confession and being repentant.

Such personal confession, penance, and expiation, are evidential of how a practising Catholic interacts with the Divine and is thus personally reminded of what is spiritual, eternal, numinous, and beyond the causal everyday world."

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[1] Qv. John 20:22-23,

> λάβετε πνεῦμα ἅγιον ἄν τινων ἀφῆτε τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἀφέωνται αὐτοῖς ἄν τινων κρατῆτε κεκράτηνται
>
> Receive Halig Spiritus: if you release anyone from their errors, they are released; if you hold onto them, they are held onto.

In regard to the term Spiritus, in my commentary on John 1:31 I wrote:

> *τὸ πνεῦμα*. Almost without exception, since Wycliffe's Bible the Greek here has been translated as "the spirit", although the ASV [the Anglo-Saxon Version] has gast (gast of heofenum), whence the later English word 'ghost'. However, given what the terms 'spirit' and 'ghost' – both in common usage, and as a result of over a thousand years of Christian exegesis – now impute, it is apposite to offer an alternative and one which is germane to the milieu of the Gospels or which at least suggests something of the numinosity presenced, in this instance, via the Gospel of John.
>
> Given that the transliteration pnuema – with its modern association with terms such as pneumatic – does not unequivocally suggest the numinous, I have chosen spiritus, as referenced in respect of gast in *Wright's Anglo-Saxon And Old English Vocabularies.*

In regard to the translation Halig Spiritus, in my commentary on John 5:33 I wrote:

> I have here used the Old English word Halig – as for example found in the version of John 17.11 in the Lindisfarne Gospel, 'Du halig fæder' – to translate ἅγιος rather than the later word 'holy' derived as that is from halig and used as it was by Wycliffe in his 1389 translation of this phrase, "in the Hooly Gost", which itself echoes the ASV, "on Halgum Gaste."
>
> The unique phrase *in Halig Spiritus* – in place of the conventional 'with the Holy Spirit' – may thus express something of the numinosity, and the newness, of the original Gospel, especially as the word 'holy' has been much overused, imputes particular meanings from over a thousand years of exegesis, and, latterly in common parlance, has become somewhat trivialized.

[2] As I have noted in several essays, and in my translation of the Gospel of John, I prefer to translate the Greek term ἁμαρτία not by the conventional 'sin' but rather by 'error' or 'mistake'.

As I wrote in the essay *Exegesis and Translation*,

> One of the prevalent English words used in translations of the New Testament, and one

of the words now commonly associated with revealed religions such as Christianity and Islam, is sin. A word which now imputes and for centuries has imputed a particular and at times somewhat strident if not harsh moral attitude, with sinners starkly contrasted with the righteous, the saved, and with sin, what is evil, what is perverse, to be shunned and shudderingly avoided. One of the oldest usages of the word sin – so far discovered – is in the c. 880 CE translation of the c. 525 CE text *Consolatio Philosophiae*, a translation attributed to King Ælfred. Here, the Old English spelling of syn is used: Þæt is swiðe dyslic & swiðe micel syn þæt mon þæs wenan scyle be Gode. The context of the original Latin of Boethius is cogitare, in relation to a dialogue about goodness and God, so that the sense of the Latin is that it is incorrect – an error, wrong – to postulate/claim/believe certain things about God. There is thus here, in Boethius, as in early English texts such as Beowulf, the sense of doing what was wrong, of committing an error, of making a mistake, of being at fault; at most of overstepping the bounds, of transgressing limits imposed by others, and thus being 'guilty' of such an infraction, a sense which the suggested etymology of the word syn implies: from the Latin sons, sontis. Thus, this early usage of the English word syn seems to impart a sense somewhat different from what we now associate with the word sin, which is why in my translation of John, 8.7 I eschewed that much overused and pejorative word in order to try and convey something of the numinous original:

> So, as they continued to ask [for an answer] he straightened himself, saying to them: "Let he who has never made a mistake [Αναμαρτητος] throw the first stone at her."
>
> ὡς δὲ ἐπέμενον ἐρωτῶντες αὐτόν, ἀνέκυψεν καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· ὁ ἀναμάρτητος ὑμῶν πρῶτος ἐπ' αὐτὴν βαλέτω λίθον.

Jesus here is not, in my view, sermonizing about sin, as a puritan preacher might, and as if he is morally superior to and has judged the sinners. Instead, he is rather gently and as a human pointing out an obvious truth about our human nature; explaining, in v.11, that he has not judged her conduct:

> ἡ δὲ εἶπεν· οὐδείς, κύριε. εἶπεν δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς· οὐδὲ ἐγώ σε κατακρίνω· πορεύου, ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν μηκέτι ἁμάρτανε
>
> [And] she answered, No one, my Lord. Whereupon Jesus replied "Neither do I judge [κατακρίνω] you, therefore go, and avoid errors such as those."
>
> The essay is available at https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2013/04/26/exegesis-and-translation/ and was included as an Appendix to my *Mercvrii Trismegisti Pymander*.

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<end quotation !>

Myatt goes on to explain what he means by how 'a practising Catholic interacts with the Divine and is thus personally reminded of what is spiritual, eternal, numinous',

> "This personal – and via the Confessional, this priestly – connexion to the Divine, with the attendant penitence, penance, personal expiation, seems to me to have been somewhat neglected when non-Catholics, and even some Catholics, criticize the Roman Catholic Church [...]
>
> That is, such criticism is secular; based on what is temporal, causal, such as some secular law or some personal emotive reaction, with the spiritual – the eternal – dimension to mortal life unconsidered. Which spiritual dimension is for Catholics based on allowing for personal expiation by spiritual means such as confession, penitence, and penance [...]

> For judgement according to such a spiritual dimension was, rightly or wrongly, often considered more important than secular recompense and secular punishment."

His argument being that, in judging the actions of a person, "the application of certain spiritual considerations" were, in the past, more important that secular ones because they are based "on the belief in the Eternal Life – in Heaven or in Hell – which awaits all mortals, one portal to such an Eternal Life in Heaven being, according to Catholic faith, the sacrament of confession."

He expands on this in *Part Three - Two Metaphysical Contradictions Of The Modern West* - writing that the expectations of the Cathodic Church, as in a letter written by Pope Francis, dated 1° de enero de 2019, in this era now seem to be:

> "that secular justice - as understood and as implemented by the State - has a higher priority than judicium divinum, the divine justice of God or of the gods."

For centuries, the Cathodic Church taught the primacy of divine justice, and that in Myatt's view

> "the move toward the change [Pope Francis] suggests is in part at least placatory, in conformity with our epoch with its powerful secular Media and its powerful modern secular States; and second that the religious, the numinous, the spiritual, balance presenced for millennia by aspects of the Roman Catholic Church - the devotion to the sacred over and above the secular - is continuing to be lost within the Roman Catholic Church, with judicium divinum and the secular justice of some State now apparently considered by the Pope as metaphysically equal."

Such temperate views, based on experience and study, are also evident in his *Questions of Good, Evil, Honour, and God* where Myatt asks important ethical, philosophical, questions including whether "the definitions and thence the theology and epistemology and the morality of religions, over millennia, enabled more and more of us to avoid doing or causing what is bad," and "does jurisprudence - and thence The State - offer an acceptable alternative" and whether or not we as a species can change without "a belief in some reward or the threat of punishment - be such karmic, eschatological, or deriving from something such as a State."

Good And Evil

In his *Questions of Good, Evil, Honour, and God* Myatt begins his analysis of the Christian answers by asking what is meant by the phrase γινώσκοντες καλὸν καὶ πονηρόν in Genesis 3.5 which is conventionally translated as "knowing good and evil".

He suggests that this presumes a theological ideation such as 'the forces/realm of good' contrasted with 'the forces/realm of evil' as if they have an existence external to us and associated with, in the case of 'evil', an entity

> "described in the Hebrew scriptures as a serpent and in LXX as ὄφις, a mythological creature familiar to readers of Hesiod's Theogony and from myths and legends concerning the oracle at Delphi and the Πύθων."

Dissenting, Myatt asks whether,

> "in respect of this 'good and evil', might the Greek of LXX - and the Hebrew text - suggest something other than such a theological ideation? That is, how might the Greek text have been understood in its time?"

There follows a lengthy section about (i) the meaning of κάλος and πονηρόν, in resect of which he quotes Homer and Sophocles, and that γινώσκοντες καλὸν καὶ πονηρόν might suggest some contrast between what is beneficial/admirable/beautiful /noble/honourable and what is wearisome/cowardly/ dishonourable; (ii) the Hebrew of Genesis 3.5 - generally rendered as "knowing tov and rah" - with tov suggesting pleasing, pleasant, beautiful, and rah adversity, unpleasant, harmful, injurious; and (iii)

Genesis 8.21 followed by Luke 6.43-5 in Greek with his own translation; and (iv) Aeschylus, Sophocles, and verses from Romans 12 and 13, again in Greek with his own translations.

He concludes the section by writing that

> what these examples reveal - and many other examples from Christian scripture could be adduced - is not abstract, impersonal, theological concepts of 'good' and 'evil' but rather something personal that individuals can relate to and understand, and it is tempting therefore to suggest that it was later, and theological,interpretations and interpolations which led to a harsh dichotomy, an apocalyptic eschatology, a 'war' between an abstract 'good' and 'evil', and that with such interpretations and interpolations - much in evidence in the persecution of alleged heretics - the simple gospel message of the health of love was somehow lost for a while, to be, later on, re-expressed by people such as William Penn, who wrote, in his *Some Fruits of Solitude*, "Let us then try what love can do".

Moving on to the Muslim view, he provides quotations from the Koran in Arabic followed by his own "fallible interpretations of meaning" in English, knowing from his Muslim years not to describe them as 'translations'.

He quotes Surah 5 Ayah 100, Surah 2 Ayah 267, and Surah 2 Ayah 267, the latter of which interprets:

> "From what We give you from the earth and from the good things you have earned - disburse; but do not look toward disbursing those defective things, which you would never take [for yourself] unless your eyes were closed."

His view is that

> "as with the New Testament, what these examples reveal - and many other examples could be adduced - is not abstract concepts of 'good' and 'evil' but rather something that is understandable by individuals and related to themselves and the world around them."

In his *The Way Of Jesus of Nazareth: A Question Of Hermeneutics?* {9} he expands upon his statement that "the simple gospel message of the health of love was somehow lost for a while" by referencing his translation of the Gospel of John and concluding that:

> What emerges from my own translation – that is, from my particular 'interpretation of meaning' of the Gospel According To John – is rather reminiscent of what individuals such as Julian of Norwich, George Fox, and William Penn wrote and said about Jesus and the spiritual way that the Gospels in particular revealed. This is the way of humility, of forgiveness, of love, of a personal appreciation of the divine, of the numinous; and a spiritual, interior, way somewhat different from supra-personal moralistic interpretations based on inflexible notions of 'sin' and thus on what is considered 'good' and what is considered 'evil'.

Hence why he writes that the Gospel of John "contains certain truths not only about our physis as human beings but also about our relation to Being, to the divine, to the numinous."

Thus for Myatt the Gospel of John forms part of what he terms 'the culture of pathei-mathos' {10} with their being

> "in this culture of pathei-mathos a particular ethos: the tone of harmony, ἁρμονίη; of a natural balance, or rather of how certain human actions are hubris - ὕβρις - and not only disrupt this needful harmony but also cause or contribute to suffering. Of the importance, and perhaps the primacy, of human love; of how Eris is the child of Polemos and Hubris, and of how a lovelorn Polemos follows Hubris around, never requited. Of how the truths of religions and spiritual ways are, in their genesis, basically simple, always numinous, and most probably the same: guides to living in such a way that we can rediscover the natural balance, appreciate the numinous, and

> avoid hubris."

In Part Three of *Questions of Good, Evil, Honour, and God* - subtitled *Religion, Law, and The Reformation of Individuals* - Myatt describes how all this, and his analysis in Part Two of Islamic and Western jurisprudence, and of the modern State, relates to his philosophy of pathei-mathos. For the culture of pathei-mathos:

> "not only provides, as does the modern State, a perspective (and a teleology) unrelated to the judgement of a supreme deity and the promise of an after-life, but also points us toward answers rather different from those provided by proponents of the State, of liberal democracy, and of a jurisprudence concerned with international law and codifying and criminalizing what politicians, and/or some political theory, ideology, dogma, or agenda, deem to be bad.
>
> For what that culture provides is an understanding of how all forms - be they considered political, or codified ideologically or in the form of a dogmatic hierarchical religion - have caused suffering, or do cause suffering sooner or later, because they are judgemental, supra-personal; and that such suffering is unjustified because it is individual human beings and indeed the other life with which we share this planet who and which are important; and that to alleviate and to prevent and remove the causes of suffering is necessary because a manifestation of what is good; that is, a manifestation of reasoned, balanced, compassionate, personal judgement, and of that learning, that knowledge, the insights, that personal experience of conflict, war, disaster, tragedy, havoc, violence, hatred, and pain, have taught and revealed to individuals for some three thousand years."

Which, in his words, leads to

> "an understanding of (i) how good and bad are not 'out there' and cannot be manifest or assumed to be manifest in some form, by some ideation, or in 'them' (the others), without causing or contributing to or being the genesis of suffering, but instead are within us as individuals, a part of our nature, our character, our φύσις, and often divergently expressed; and (ii) of how, in my view at least, personal honour and not a codified law, not a jurisprudence, is the best, the most excellent, way to define and manifest this 'good', with honour understood, as in my philosophy of pathei-mathos, as an instinct for and an adherence to what is fair, dignified, and valourous."

This relates to his understanding of honour as described in the *The Numinous Balance of Honour* section of chapter VI of his *The Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos*. {11}

Which understanding, as with most of his philosophy of pathei-mathos, {12} he frames in terms of classical rather than modern philosophy and thus uses ancient Greek terms:

> "In many ways, the personal virtue of honour, and the cultivation of wu-wei, are - together - a practical, a living, manifestation of our understanding and appreciation of the numinous; of how to live, to behave, as empathy intimates we can or should in order to avoid committing the folly, the error, of ὕβρις, in order not to cause suffering, and in order to re-present, to acquire, ἁρμονίη. For personal honour is essentially a presencing, a grounding, of ψυχή - of Life, of our φύσις - occurring when the insight (the knowing) of a developed empathy inclines us toward a compassion that is, of necessity, balanced by σωφρονεῖν and in accord with δίκη."

Myatt's understanding of honour as a personal presencing of the numinous and a consequence of empathy - that is, his understanding of good and evil - may be said to be one ultimately based on experience. For his philosophy:

> "is not a conventional, an academic, one where a person intellectually posits or constructs a coherent theory - involving ontology, epistemology, ethics, and so on - often as a result of an extensive dispassionate study, review, or a criticism of the philosophies or views, past and present, advanced by other individuals involved in the pursuit of philosophy as an academic

discipline or otherwise. Instead, the philosophy of pathei-mathos is the result of my own pathei-mathos, my own learning from diverse - sometimes outré, sometimes radical and often practical - ways of life and experiences over some four decades; of my subsequent reasoned analysis, over a period of several years, of those ways and those experiences; of certain personal intuitions, spread over several decades, regarding the numinous; of an interior process of personal and moral reflexion, lasting several years and deriving from a personal tragedy; and of my life-long study and appreciation of Hellenic culture."

Which brings us to the core of that experience, the concept of honour, and how experience and his learning from experience caused him to refine it over the decades. From being a codified part of his extremist ideology to being a manifestation, a personal understanding, of the essence of 'the human culture of pathei-mathos'.

This was the 'inner struggle' described in his autobiography *Myngath*, {13} during which Myatt's perception of honour and duty would be changed.

Part Two

Extremism, War, And Honour

In his old writings as a neo-nazi ideologist (1984-1998) and, later (2001-2008) as a Muslim apologist for al-Qaeda and the Taliban, Myatt eulogized Kampf and Jihad, and the role of "the warrior". {14}

This began to change when a personal tragedy led him to his question his extremist past and extremism in general; a questioning he wrote about in his semi-autobiographical 2013 book *Understanding and Rejecting Extremism: A Very Strange Peregrination*. {8}

A passage from that book provides the necessary personal and philosophical context, and a passage I quote in full since it also explains the genesis of his understanding of suffering, of the inhumanity of war, and of extremism in general:

"I have - fully knowing my past hubris, the suffering I have caused, and aware of my manifold errors and mistakes over four decades - a great respect for other religions and spiritual ways, and aware as I am how they each in their own manner, express, have expressed, or are intimations of, the numinous. For instance, I have come to appreciate, more and more over the past few years, the numinosity of the sacred music of the Christian Church (especially Catholicism), from before Gregorian chant to composers such as Byrd, Dowland, Lassus, to Palestrina, to Phillipe de Monte, and beyond. So much so that such sacred music is now the only music I can listen to, out of choice, redolent as it is, has become, for me, of the beautiful, of humility, of tragedy, of a sacred suprapersonal joy, of what is or can be divined through contemplative prayer. A remarkable treasure of culture, of pathei-mathos...

Without such religious, such spiritual, such organized, reminders, daily or weekly - that is, without prayer and without what is perhaps the best that religions and spirituality manifest - how do we balance another need of ours? That need to cause suffering and cry havoc, and a need whose genesis, perhaps, resides in our desire to be, to express, to re-affirm the separation-of-otherness, manifest as this is and has been in our own self-importance, our egoism, our greed; and in our belief that 'we', our assumed or our assigned category, are better than, superior to, 'them', the others: that 'we' are 'right' or have right on our side while 'they' do not and are wrong, leading as such belief so often does and so often has done to conflict and war and to us treating 'the others' in a dishonourable, uncompassionate, way because we, or those we follow and obey, have dehumanized 'them'. For I now incline toward the view that without such categorization, such assumptions - such a prejudice, such a belief - about 'us' and 'them', without such greed, such self-interest, and such a need to express, to manifest, importance, then war and suffering-causing armed conflict are not possible.

Is humility, therefore and as most religions and spiritual ways inform us, a necessity for us, as human beings? And if so, then how to manifest such humility, to be reminded of such a need, if we, as I now, personally have no expectation of or belief in God, or in Allah - in Heaven or Jannah - or in gods, or even in mechanisms such as rebirth and karma? Such questions have greatly occupied me for the past three years.

Given what I have intuited about our human nature - what many others have intuited or discovered over millennia - and what I believe I may have learned from my own pathei-mathos, I feel humility is indeed a necessity for us, as a means of guiding us toward avoiding causing suffering; as a means of placing our own life in the cosmic perspective of Life. That is, as a means of appreciating our nature as fallible, error-prone, beings who have the ability, the character, to not only refrain from committing the error of hubris but to also rationally understand why hubris is an error and what the numinous may be, beyond ideations and beyond the myths, the allegories, the spiritualities, the words, that we have used and do use in order to try and express it.

As to how to manifest humility - sans religions, sans prayer to a deity or deities, (etcetera) - I admit I do not know, although my [philosophy of pathei-mathos] is my attempt to find, and to try and express, some answers. Fallible answers such as the importance, the numinosity, of personal love; fallible answers such as empathy, and the knowing, the understanding, of others (and of ourselves) that empathy provides and of how such empathy and such empathic knowing is and can only be personal."

Here we have, in what he termed the separation-of-otherness, the basis for his philosophy of pathei-mathos: (i) pathei-mathos, (ii) the knowledge provided by empathy, and (iii) that this knowing is personal and thus cannot form the basis for anything supra-personal such as a political ideology or a religion.

As he explains in that Part One of *Understanding and Rejecting Extremism*:

> [A]ll extremists accept - and all extremisms are founded on - the instinctive belief or the axiom that their cherished ideation(s) or abstraction(s) is or are more important, more valuable, than the individual and the feelings, desires, hopes, and happiness, of the individual. The extremist thus views and understands the world in terms of abstractions [...]
>
> The abstractions of extremism are manifest in the ideology, which posits or which attempts to explain (however irrationally and intolerantly) some ideated form, some assumed or believed in perfect (ideal) form or category of some-thing, and which ideated form is or can be or should be (according to the ideology) contrasted with what is considered or assumed to be its 'opposite' [...]
>
> The individual, extremist or otherwise, is therefore required to accept - be subservient to - the judgement that the ideology asserts, or which some ideologue proclaims, is correct; for all ideologies denigrate or require (overtly or otherwise) the suspension of individual judgement either in favour of the collective, 'correct', ideological one, or in favour of the judgement of some leader, ideologue, or some 'higher authority'.

What his own pathei-mathos and that of others revealed was:

> "a quite simple truth; that what is wrong is causing or contributing to suffering, and that, with (at least in my admittedly fallible opinion) one exception and one exception only we cannot now (again, at least in my admittedly fallible opinion) morally justify intentionally causing or contributing to the suffering of any living being.
>
> How many more centuries - or millennia - will we need? To learn, to change, to cease to cause such suffering as we have for so many millennia caused.
>
> My own life - of four decades of suffering-causing extremism and personal selfishness - is, most

> certainly, just one more example of our manful capacity to be stupid and hubriatic. To fail to learn from the pathei-mathos of human culture, even though I personally had the advantages of a living in diverse cultures and of a 'classical education', and thus was taught or became familiar with the insights of Lao Tzu, of Siddhartha Gautama, of Jesus of Nazareth, of Sappho, Sophocles, Aeschylus, Cicero, Livy, Marcus Aurelius, Dante Alighieri, Jane Austen, Charles Dickens, TS Eliot, EM Forster, and so many others; and even though I had the opportunity to discover, to participate in, and thus felt, the numinosity, the learning, inherent in so many other things, from plainchant to Byrd, Dowland, Palestrina, Tallis, to JS Bach and beyond. And yet, despite all these advantages, all these chances to learn, to evolve, I remained hubriatic; selfish, arrogant, in thrall to ideations, and like so many men somewhat addicted to the joy, to the pleasures, of Kampf, placing pursuit of that pleasure, or some cause, or some ideation, or my own needs, before loved ones, family, friends. Only learning, only finally and personally learning, after a death too far."

Honour And Empathy

During Myatt's National Socialist years his perception of honour was of it as "the natural instinct for nobility made conscious and this is done through a Code of Honour" {15} which laid down rules of behaviour such as being reserved in public and not given to displays of emotion.

During his "inner struggle" between 2006 and 2009 such an impersonal written codification with its rules or commandments was at odds with the individual learning inherent in the culture of pathei-mathos:

> "One uncomfortable truth from which even I with all my sophistry could not contrive to hide from myself, even though I tried, for a while. The truth that I am indebted. That I have a debt of personal honour to both Fran and to Sue, who died - thirteen years apart - leaving me bereft of love, replete with sorrow, and somewhat perplexed. A debt to all those other women who, over four decades, I have hurt in a personal way; a debt to the Cosmos itself for the suffering I have caused and inflicted through the unethical pursuit of abstractions.
>
> A debt somehow and in some way - beyond a simple remembrance of them - to especially make the life and death of Sue and Fran worthwhile and full of meaning, as if their tragic early dying meant something to both me, and through my words, my deeds, to others. A debt of change, of learning - in me, so that from my pathei- mathos I might be, should be, a better person; presencing through words, living, thought, and deeds, that simple purity of life felt, touched, known, in those stark moments of the immediacy of their loss.
>
> But this honour, I have so painfully discovered, is not the abstract honour of years, of decades, past that I in my arrogance and stupid adherence to and love of abstractions so foolishly believed in and upheld, being thus, becoming thus, as I was a cause of suffering. No; this instead is the essence of honour, founded in empathy; in an empathy with and thus a compassion for all life, sentient and otherwise. This is instead a being human; being in symbiosis with that-which is the essence of our humanity and which can, could and should, gently evolve us." {16}

In 2014 he expressed his understanding more philosophically, writing that personal honour

> "presences the virtues of fairness, tolerance, compassion, humility, and εὐταξία - as (i) a natural intuitive (wordless) expression of the numinous ('the good', δίκη, συμπάθεια) and (ii) of both what the culture of pathei-mathos and the acausal-knowing of empathy reveal we should do (or incline us toward doing) in the immediacy of the personal moment when personally confronted by what is unfair, unjust, and extreme.
>
> Of how such honour - by its and our φύσις - is and can only ever be personal, and thus cannot be extracted out from the 'living moment' and our participation in the moment; for it is only through such things as a personal study of the culture of pathei-mathos and the development of the faculty of empathy that a person who does not naturally possess the instinct for δίκη can

> develope what is essentially 'the human faculty of honour', and which faculty is often appreciated and/or discovered via our own personal pathei-mathos." {17}

This "cannot be extracted out from the living moment" also applies to empathy since

> "empathy is a human faculty mean that the apprehension is wordless and personal and cannot be extrapolated beyond, or abstracted out from, the individual without losing some or all of its numinosity since the process of denotatum - of abstraction - devolves around the meanings assigned to words, terms, and names, and which meanings can and do vary over causal time and may be (mis)interpreted by others often on the basis of some idea, or theory, or on some comparative exegesis." {18}

Furthermore, when asked in a 2022 interview:

> "You appear to have forged an existential crucible from which many now draw inspiration. How would you like to see that inspiration embodied in the lives of those who look up to you?" {19}

Myatt's answer was:

> "Just as my fallible understanding is that honour cannot be abstracted from a personal moment to become some sort of principle or guide, so my similar fallible understanding is that a person who learns by means of pathei-mathos cannot be or rather should not become such a guide or even an example and certainly should not assume any sort of guiding role."

In the same interview when asked where does he philosophically situate his own paganus weltanschauung, he replied:

> "I do not situate my weltanschauung anywhere in terms defined or believed or discussed by others, ancient or modern, because it is just my weltanschauung, born from various experiences and the loss of loved ones, and nurtured by working and living on a farm in England, by solitary walks along a sea-shore and in the hills and deciduous woods of English Shires."

Which answers express the raison d'être of his philosophy: the personal pathei-mathos of one person and, as he also says in that 2022 interview, his "attempt at expiation".

Conclusion

Those answers in that 2022 interview return us to where we began: with his defence, based on personal experience, of Catholicism, and with his 2013 text *Religion, Empathy, and Pathei-Mathos*, the first chapter of which, titled *Numinous Expiation*, invokes the dilemma he faced when confronting his extremist past:

> "One of the many problems regarding my own past which troubles me - and has troubled me for a while - is how can a person make reparation for suffering caused, inflicted, and/or dishonourable deeds done. For, in the person of empathy, of compassion, of honour, a knowledge and understanding of dishonour done, of the suffering one has caused - perhaps before one became such a person of compassion, honour, and empathy - is almost invariably the genesis of strong personal feelings such as remorse, grief, and sorrow. The type of strong feelings that Christopher Marlowe has Iarbus, King of Gaetulia, voice at the end of the play *The Tragedie of Dido Queene of Carthage*, written c.1587:
>
> > Cursed Iarbas, die to expiate
> > The grief that tires upon thine inward soul.
>
> One of the many benefits of an organized theistic religion, such as Christianity or Islam or Judaism, is that mechanisms of personal expiation exist whereby such feelings can be placed in context and expiated by appeals to the supreme deity. In Judaism, there is Teshuvah culminating

in Yom Kippur, the day of expiation/reconciliation. In Catholicism, there is the sacrament of confession and penance. In Islam, there is personal dua to, and reliance on, Allah Ar-Rahman, Ar-Raheem, As-Salaam.

Even pagan religions and ways had mechanisms of personal expiation for wrong deeds done, often in the form of propitiation; the offering of a sacrifice, perhaps, or compensation by the giving or the leaving of a valuable gift or votive offering at some numinous - some sacred and venerated - place or site."

The only answers Myatt could find were his pagan philosophy of pathei-mathos {3} and his writings about rejecting extremism. That certain academics and persons of a particular political persuasion have prejudicially rejected his answers surely reveals something significant about them.

Rachael Stirling
January 2023
Second Edition 2026

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{1} *The Trouble With Mr Myatt*, in Part Two of *A Similitude For Our Times*, https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/second-edition-accusations-revised.pdf

{2} *Trial By Media*, in Part One of *A Similitude For Our Times*, https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/second-edition-accusations-revised.pdf

{3} The pagan nature of Myatt's philosophy is comprehensibly described in *The Pagan Philosophy Of David Myatt*, which includes the monograph *Western Paganism And Hermeticism: Myatt And The Renaissance of Western Culture*. https://concerningmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2022/09/myatt-paganism.pdf

{4} The use of the English term numinous dates from the 17th century, and Myatt explains his understanding of the numinous in his essay *From Mythoi To Empathy*:

> "that it is primarily a perceiveration, not a personal emotion or feeling, not a mysterium, and not an idea in the sense of Plato's εἶδος and thus is not similar to Kant's concept of a priori. As a perceiveration, while it includes an apprehension of what is often referred to as 'the divine', 'the holy' - and sometimes thus is an apprehension of theos or theoi - it is not limited to such apprehensions, since as in the past it is often an intimation of, an intuition concerning, the natural balance of ψυχή; a balance which ὕβρις [hubris] upsets. This natural balance – our being as human beings – is or can be manifest to us in or by what is harmonious, or what reminds us of what is harmonious and beautiful." The Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos, seventh edition, 2022, pp.38-41, https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2022/10/numinous-way-pathei-mathos-v7.pdf

{5} https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/religion-and-empathy.pdf

{6} https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2018/09/09/persecution-and-war/

{7} https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2019/02/in-defence-rc-1.pdf

{8} *Understanding And Rejecting Extremism*, https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2022/10/davidmyatt-rejecting-extremism.pdf

{9} https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2017/09/30/the-way-of-jesus-of-nazareth/

{10} Myatt describes this culture in the following terms:

> "The pathei-mathos of individuals over thousands of years, often described in literature, poetry,

> memoirs, aural stories, and often expressed via non-verbal mediums such as music and Art, has resulted in an accumulation of insights; what we might with some justification describe as a culture, which, while often redolent of the spiritual, is not religious. That is, not doctrinal, not codified, not organized, and not presenting or manifesting a theology. A culture that is supra-national, containing as it does, among many other treasures, the observations of Lao Tzu, Siddhartha Gautama, Ovid, and Mohandas K. Gandhi; the thoughts of Aeschylus, Sappho, and Sophocles; the writings of Marcus Aurelius and Jane Austen; the allegory, the mysterium, of Jesus of Nazareth; and, importantly, the experiences - written, recorded, and aural - of those who over the centuries have endured suffering, conflict, disaster, tragedy, and war, and who were forever changed by the experience."

{11} *The Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos*, seventh edition, 2022, https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2022/10/numinous-way-pathei-mathos-v7.pdf

A printed edition is also available, ISBN-13: 978-1484096642

{12} This use of Greek terms, sometimes transliterated, sometimes not, makes his philosophy not only rather distinct among modern philosophies but also often obscure. In his defence, Myatt writes that

> "the philosophy of πάθει μάθος has certain connexions to Hellenic culture and I tend therefore to use certain Greek words in order to try and elucidate my meaning and/or to express certain philosophical principles regarded as important in - and for an understanding of - this philosophy; a usage of words which I have endeavoured to explain as and where necessary, sometimes by quoting passages from Hellenic literature or other works and by providing translations of such passages. For it would be correct to assume that the ethos of this philosophy is somewhat indebted to and yet - and importantly - is also a development of the ethos of Hellenic culture; an indebtedness obvious in notions such as δίκη, πάθει μάθος, avoidance of ὕβρις, and references to Heraclitus, Aeschylus, and others, and a development manifest in notions such as empathy and the importance attached to the virtue of compassion." Introduction to Part Two of *The Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos*, seventh edition, 2022, op.cit.

As with the philosophy of Heidegger, who also uses Greek terms and certain words, such as Dasein, in a particular philosophical way, Myatt's philosophy requires serious study.

{13} David Myatt, *Myngath*, 2013, pp.65-67, https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2013/04/davidmyatt-myngath.pdf

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{14} Rachael Stirling's *The Peregrinations Of David Myatt: National Socialist Ideologist* chronicles Myatt's extremist decades with quotations from his neo-nazi and Islamist writings. Printed edition, ISBN-13: 979-8392990900

{15} *The Meaning of National-Socialism*, included in *Selected National Socialist Writings Of David Myatt*, https://archive.org/download/myatt-selected-ns-writings1/myatt-selected-ns-writings1.pdf

{16} *Myngath*, pp.80-81 of the pdf edition, op.cit.

{17} *The Way Of Pathei-Mathos - A Précis*, included in his book *One Vagabond In Exile From The Gods*, 2014. A gratis pdf version is available at https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2014/10/one-vagabond-pathei-mathos.pdf

{18} *From Mythoi To Empathy*, 2018. Included in *The Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos*, seventh edition, 2022, https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2022/10/numinous-way-pathei-mathos-v7.pdf

{19} *David Myatt And The Pinch of Destiny*. Included in *An Uncertitude Of Knowing: Four Interviews*, 2023, ISBN-13: 978-8394746575

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